

WEEKLY CHRONICLE

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Congressman Filner Introduces Bill Funding Military Funerals

Congressman Bob Filner has reintroduced his bill, the "Providing Military Honors to our Nation's Heroes Act" (H.R. 545). This legislation honors the service and sacrifice of America's veterans by reimbursing the expenses of volunteers who provide military funeral honors at their funerals.

"Due to the high volume of service members who are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and the thousands of World War II and Korean War veterans who die each year, there are simply not enough military resources available to provide a proper honors detail for each veteran's funeral," said Congressman Filner. "Some families of veterans have had to 'make do' with a CD playing 'Taps.' I am saddened by this outrageous situation and determined to provide proper military funeral honors for all families who request them."

The "Providing Military Honors to our Nation's Heroes Act" will allow reimbursement to

volunteers from members of veterans' service organizations (VSOs) and other organizations approved by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). Transportation costs and other expenses — such as cleaning uniforms — incurred in providing funeral honors details will be reimbursed. A second change will allow reimbursement to details that are requested by funeral homes and the VA, as well as the Department of Defense.

Currently, members of VSOs and other volunteers can assist the military by providing a color guard, pallbearers, a bugler or firing party, but the law does not address ceremonies in which VSOs render honors without military representation. This bill will allow volunteers to be reimbursed even when no military person is a part of the honor guard. This change will increase the number of honors details available to families.